

# THE ANDALUSIAN ROLE IN THE SCIENTIFIC LIFE IN JERUSALEM UNTIL THE END OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AH / 11<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AD (MODELING IBN AL-ARABI AND AT-TURTUSHI)

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## ABSTRACT

*Scientific and cultural ties were at the top of the Andalusian concerns in Palestine. During the Abbasid period, the presence of the Andalusians increased in Palestine in general and in Jerusalem, in particular, strengthening the different relations between the Andalusians and the Palestinians happened. Also, many of Andalusian scholars came to Palestine from learning where they heard and narrated Hadith and entered in scientific debates with Palestinian and non-Palestinian scholars.*

*In the light of this context, the current study aimed to investigate the Andalusian role in Palestine during the Abbasid period until the Crusades against Palestine at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century AH/11<sup>th</sup> Century AD. The study also tackles the role of independent states that ruled during that prominent period of the Palestinian history under the Islamic Era (132 AH / 750 AD to 492 AH / 1099 AD).*

*The study includes two main issues; the first one is about the social concerns of the Andalusian travelers; the second one is about the cultural and intellectual role of the Andalusians in Palestine. The study found that the Andalusians played a key role in the cultural and intellectual aspects in Palestine as many of their scholars came to Palestine for learning and sharing knowledge.*

**KEYWORDS:** Andalusia, Scientific Life, Jerusalem, Ibn al-Arabi & At-Turtushi

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## INTRODUCTION

Palestine, especially Jerusalem, has a great place in the hearts of Muslims. It is a holy blessed land where the first Qibla and the third holy site of Islam exist. Also, Palestine has a unique geographical location that bridge the eastern and western sides of the Islamic World; this is why too many scholars, merchants, and others visited this country. These factors activated the intellectual and economic life, which attracted the people of Morocco and Andalusia to take advantage of the great knowledge and to be beneficial to other people.

Many attraction factors played a role in the communication between Andalusians and Palestine like the religious and geographical factors (Al-Maqri, p. 209). Besides, the political factor also had a role in the Andalusian presence in Palestine, where Palestine was a refuge for some fugitive rulers, leaving clear effects on various aspects of life. It's worth mentioning the role of the scientific journey in the quest for knowledge, which was an important motive for the movement of Andalusian scientists between the Islamic countries and cities, including Palestine.

The current study aimed to investigate the Andalusian role in Palestine during the Abbasid period until the Crusades against Palestine at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century AH/11<sup>th</sup> Century AD. It also tackles the role of independent states that ruled during that prominent period of the Palestinian history under the Islamic Era (132 AH / 750 AD to 492 AH / 1099 AD).

### **The Study Answers the Following Questions**

- What is the nature of Andalusian presence in Palestine during the Abbasid period?
- How were the cultural and scientific relations between Morocco and Andalusia and Jerusalem in the Abbasid period?
- What scientific contributions did the Andalusians make during their stay in Jerusalem?
- What did Andalusians focus on during their stay in Jerusalem?
- Who are the most famous Andalusian scholars who came to Jerusalem and contributed to scientific life?

To answer the previous questions, the researcher divided the study into section including the Andalusian social, cultural and intellectual interests. The historical, descriptive approach was used in this study to trace back the information available in the historical and geographical references and resources.

### **Previous Studies**

Despite the importance of the issue under study, the researcher has not found any previous study tackling the same issue. However, the researcher found similar studies like:

- Elhaj Afifa (2010). "The contributions of Moroccans and Andalusians in Egypt and Syria since the beginning of the sixth century to the end of the ninth century; the twelfth to the ninth century AD." The University of Algeria.
- Ali Ahmad (1989). "Andalusians and Moroccans in the Levant from the end of the fifth century until the end of the ninth century AH." Damascus.
- Saladin Munjid (1963). "The East in the eyes of Moroccans and Andalusians in the Middle Ages." Beirut.

During their presence in Jerusalem until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, the Andalusians focused on various aspects that detailed as follows.

### **The Social Role**

On the social lever, the Andalusians who arrived in Palestine were highly interested in describing one of the important aspects of social life in the Palestinian cities, which is the life of Jerusalemite women. For example, Ibn al-Arabi (543 AH / 1148 AD) said, describing the women in Jerusalem, "I saw chaste women at Al-Aqsa mosque who did not leave their retreat until they attained martyrdom."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the Andalusian traveler Ibn al-Arabi provided an important description and a unique reference to the life of

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, 'ahkam al-Quran. Part 3, page: 569.

Palestinian women in the fifth century AH / 11<sup>th</sup> century AD, and in fact, there is a great similarity between the Palestinian women in the Al-Aqsa Mosque today and those referred to by Ibn al-Arabi.

### **The Cultural and Intellectual Role of the Andalusians**

During the period under study, Palestine witnessed a scientific movement characterized by vitality and activity in general in various fields of science and education. The movement was based on some regulations and institutions that ensured the world and the learner an environment that was conducive to giving and gathering knowledge. The region of Palestine was also known for its role and activity in the cultural and intellectual fields. However, it was a bit destabilized due to the vagaries of political life that the Levant people suffered in general and Palestine people in particular.

Ibn al-Arabi<sup>1</sup> Described the scientific life in Jerusalem, and how, despite the revolutions, seditions and lack of power it did not cease. He said, describing Bayt al-Maqdis "Despite the seditions, it has not changed; the markets were not closed, the people did not heed the revolutions, the retreats did not leave the Aqsa Mosque, and the debates were not interrupted. The militants were divided into two groups fighting each other where people overlooked them". This is unlike what was happening at Andalusia<sup>2</sup> "If such situation occurred at Andalusia, the war would break out, and the markets would close; the life would stop because we are curious, but they are not (people of Bayt al-Maqdis)." Perhaps, "That is one of the blessings of Jerusalem, which God blessed with its inhabitants in their lives, their distress, and their groans."<sup>3</sup>

During the period under study, many of Andalusian scholars were prominent in Jerusalem, where they came to receive religious and linguistics sciences from scholars of Jerusalem. For example, the Andalusian Quran reciter, Ibn al-Dabbagh, Khalaf bin Qasim, Abu al-Qasim (393 AH / 1002 AD), moved to Palestine in 345 AH / 956 and recited Quran by Ahmad Ibn Saleh, companion of Ibn Mujahid, at Ramla.<sup>4</sup>

Also, Abdul Haq Ibn Mohammed Ibn Harun (al-Sabti) who accompanied Abu Hafis al-Muqre' and died in 459 AH/ 1066 AD at Bayt al-Maqdis was amongst the scholars of Andalusia (Salafat Al-Asfahani, p. 232).

The linguist Maki Ibn Abi Talib Ibn Hamoush al-Qais al-Qairwani al-Qurtobi (437 AH/ 1045 AD) visited Jerusalem, where he wrote many books about al-Qira'at al-Sab'a (The Seven Readings). His books – around 80 books – Reflect a brilliant personality in this important field. One of his books is "Mushkil 'iierab Al-Quran" (The Syntax of Quran) that he wrote during his stay in Jerusalem. He said about this book: "I wrote it in Levant, Jerusalem, in 391 AH/ 1000AD".<sup>5</sup>

Abu Bakr al-Tartoushi, one of the scholars who moved to Jerusalem, was also interested in the science of interpretation (Quran interpretation). He summarized the book "Al-Kashf wa-l-bayān 'an tafsīr al-Qur'ān" (The Formation of the Classical Tafsir Tradition: The Quran Commentary of Al-Thalabi) by Abu Ishaq al-Tha'ali (427 AH / 1035 AD).<sup>6</sup> He held sessions at Al-Aqsa Mosque in 487 AH/ 1094 AD to teach this book. Ibn al-Arabi was amongst his students who taught the book after he returned to Andalusia.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, 'ahkam al-Quran. Part 4, page: 8.

<sup>2</sup> The origin of Ibn al-Arabi from the city of Seville, which is a great city in Andalusia.

<sup>3</sup> Tafsir al-Tabari, Jāmi' al-bayān, Part 17, page 351.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn al-Furthi, History of the scholars of Andalusia. Part 1, page 119.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Mrsfy, Hidayat al-Qari. Part 2, page 732.

<sup>6</sup> Haji khilyfat, Kashf al-Zunun. Part 2, page 419.

In the field of the science of Hadith, Abu Muhammad Abdul Haq bin Ghaleb bin Abdul Rahman bin Tammam ibn Atiyyah al-Andalusi al-Muharbi (542 AH/ 1147 AD) learned from Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Nasa'i (303 AH / 915 AD) in Ramla (Sunan at-Tirmidhi)<sup>1</sup>.

One of the Andalusians who excelled in the science of Hadith in Jerusalem was Abu Bakr Mohammed bin Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Mufraj al-Qurtubi (348 AH/ 959 AD), who visited Jerusalem, Egypt and the Levant where he learned from one hundred and thirty scholars.

The Andalusian scholar Abu al-Qasim Muslim Ibn al-Qasim Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Abdullah bin Hatim al-Qurtubi (353 AH / 964 AD) visited Jerusalem and learned from Yahya Ibn Musa in Ramla.<sup>2</sup>

Also, Abu-Tammam Abu Ghaleb al-Maghazi al-Talili (383 AH/ 993 AD) visited Gaza and learned from Abu al-Hasan ibn Abu Ayyash. As well, Abu al-Walid Hashim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Batiliusi (385 AH/ 995) learned from al-Fadl ibn Obaid Allah in Jerusalem and Ibn al-Abbas al-Ghazi in Gaza.

Abu Abbas Ibn Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Haj bin Yahya al-Ashbili al-Shahi reported from Abu Ahmed Omar bin Uthman bin Jaafar bin Mohammed al-Subaie in Ramla and from Abu Bakr Ahmed bin Abdullah bin Amr ibn Safwan, who is known as the son of Abu Dujana al-Dmshqi in Ramla.

The scientific connection did not break where Abul Hassan Ali bin Ahmed bin Tabis Ansari Miorgi al-Andalusi "(477 AH/ 1084 AD) visited Jerusalem and taught many people there. He was a linguist and grammarian fully aware of al-Maliki Jurisprudence (One of the four major schools of Fiqh)

According to Ibn al-Arabi's report on his life in Jerusalem, al-Maliki's jurisprudence was widespread in Jerusalem, and the second book in the Maliki school, " Moudawana" written by Abd al-Salam ibn al-Tannoukhi, nicknamed Sahnoun (2404 AH / 854 AD). The book was taught to students in session held in Jerusalem, where Ibn al-Arabi taught it in Jerusalem in the two educational ways that were common in Jerusalem at that time: the Kairouan method: which is based on theorizing and representation, and the Iraqi way: which is based on deduction and uncovering what is wrong.<sup>3</sup>

When Sufism was prevalent in Palestine in the 5<sup>th</sup>/ 11<sup>th</sup> century AD, some ascetics and Sufis emerged from the Andalusians residing in Jerusalem, such as Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Qurashi Andalusian (499 AH/ 1105 AD).<sup>4</sup>

In the field of history and literature, some historians visited Jerusalem. Among them was the Andalusian historian Muhammad ibn Musa ibn Hashim ibn Yazid al-Qurtubi, known as al-Qashtani (307 AH/ 919 AD), from the people of Cordoba, especially since Jerusalem was the first place of the scientific movement at that time.

In the field of literature, Ibn al-Arabi benefited from the scholars of literature who were moving between Ashkelon and Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup>

There was a quite number of poets in Jerusalem, whether those born in the city or those came as visitors to benefit

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Attiyah, fahrsat Ibn Attiyah. Page 70.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Furthi, History of the scholars of Andalusia. Part 2, p129.

<sup>3</sup> Abdul Mahdi, the intellectual movement. Page 32.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Shahab Al-Maqdisi, Muthir al-Gharam. Page 65.

<sup>5</sup> Abbas: Journey of Ibn Arabi. Page 84

from its abundant literature. The poets' tendency towards literature was justified as the princes – who were memorizing the poems and were able to know the imposter ones – officially supported them.

### **Scientific Centers of Andalusian Scholars in Jerusalem**

The centers of the confluence of the Andalusian scholars in Palestine were in mosques such as Al-Aqsa Mosque in Dome of the Chain<sup>1</sup>, which Ibn al-Arabi referred to and mentioned that he used to learn inside it.

Abu Bakr al-Tartoushi used to stay in a place call al- Ghuwair, between Lions' Gate and Mihrab Zakaria (Prayer Niche) where lessons and debates were going on in presence of scholars from Jerusalemite and visiting scholars. The students used to come to Al-Ghuwair to learn from al-Tartoushi. Ibn al-Arabi was among the students and said that he met al-Tartoushi and benefitted from him. He said "Al-Tartoushi opened the doors of science for me, God bestowed me by knowing him, he facilitated the greatest hope for me, so I stayed at Jerusalem and kept learning, I overlooked Dunya (worldly life) and did not talk to anyone, we kept learning day and night especially at Dome of the Chain".

Many scientific confluences and debates took place at Dome of the Rock mosque. Ibn al-Arabi cited an example on one of them. He said "In 487 AH / 1094 AD, a great scholar of Abu Hanifa jurisprudence, known as al-Zuzani came to visit Al-Khalil peace be upon him. He visited the Dome of Rock Mosque, May Allah purify it, and met the scholars there. There was a debate if Muslim should be killed in Qisas (equality in punishment) for killing a Kafir. Al-Zuzani said "The Muslim should be killed in Qisas); he was asked to give an evidence. Al-Zuzani said that the evidence is "prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered" (Surah Al-Baqarah, 178) and this is general for all killed ones. Imam Ataa' al-Maqdsi, a scholar of Shaaf'I jurisprudent, said "the evidence is not right and does not pretext what he said for three reasons. The first one, Allah SWT said "prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered" (Surah Al-Baqarah, 178), so the punishment is related to the equality, and there is no equality between Muslim and non-Muslim. The second, Allah SWT linked the beginning and the end of the Verse and made it clear when completed "O you who have believed, prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered - the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female" (Surah Al-Baqarah, 178). The third, Allah SWT said "But whoever overlooks from his brother anything, then there should be a suitable follow-up and payment to him with good conduct. This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy" (Surah Al-Baqarah, 178). There is no brotherhood between a Muslim and a non-Muslim who are not meant by this verse. Al-Zuzani said "That is a valid evidence and what I objected to has nothing to do with this. Your words that Allah put equality as a condition for punishment. However, you said that equality between the non-Muslim and the Muslim in the Qisas is unknown, then it is not true because they are equal in the sanctity that is sufficient in Qisas. Spilling Muslim blood is forbidden, and the same thing is applied to Ahlu al-Dhimma (protected infidels).

That was one of the important debates in the Aqidah (creed) and Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) witnessed by the courtyards of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the sacred rock, which gives clear indications of the interest of the scholars of Jerusalem to instill the correct Aqidah and Fiqh of the religion. The debate was in line with the roles of debate and dialogue. They were concerned about the of Muslims concerns of the world and the Hereafter. The debate shows that the

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<sup>1</sup> It is a free-standing dome located adjacently east of the Dome of the Rock in the Old City of Jerusalem. One of the oldest structures on the Haram ash-Sharif (Temple Mount), it is not a mosque or shrine but is used as a prayer house. It was built by the Umayyads, became a Christian chapel under the Crusaders, was restored as an Islamic prayer house by the Ayyubids and has been renovated by the Mamluks, Ottomans and the Jordanian-based waqf.

way of thinking of Andalusians and Eastern Muslims and other jurisprudences are cohered. This enriches the scientific life and leaves a good impact for all Muslims.

The mosque of Ibrahim al-Khalil in Hebron was one of the important mosques in Palestine (Al-Azizi: al-Masalik, p. 82) and a center of the meeting of foreign scholars. Ibn al-Arabi visited it in 487 AH/ 1094 AD and met many scholars and scientists.

In the year 487 AH/ 1094 AD, Ibn al-Arabi met a number of Khurasan scholars who arrived in Hebron, among them Zuzani, Saganji, Zanjani, and others. They held important scientific debates and discussions.

Ibn al-Arabi referred to his visit to the shrine of Yunus bin Matti in the village of Halhul. He mentioned that he visited the shrine several times, the last of which was in the year 487 AH/ 1094 AD during his way from Al-Aqsa Mosque to Hebron. He said, "I stayed at the shrine and got closer to Allah and learned a lot there." This proves that Ibn al-Arabi had benefited from every moment he spent in Palestine. Even in the shrines, he used to learn and benefit from the scholars in the areas he stays in even at graveyards.

Many of the Andalusians participated in scientific debates that were held at the Jerusalem schools. Ibn al-Arabi used to go to Hanafis and Shaafai's school every day to attend the debates.<sup>1</sup> This indicates that there was a strong scientific activity. Some of these schools are

#### **Al-Nasriya Shafi'i School**

Abu Bakr al-Arabi visited the school in 485 AH/ 1092 AD and met some of the Shafi'i scholars. They participated in the debates that were held continuously. He said about that, "I went to the school of Shaafa'i's on the day of their scholars' meeting to debate in the presence of their Sheikh, Judge Rashid Yahya who was assigned by our Sheikh Imam Zahid Nasr bin Ibrahim Nabulsi aal-Maqdsi (490 AH/ 1096 AD)"<sup>2</sup>

Ibn al-Arabi was very keen to report on the heated debates between Sunni and Shiite. He said, "My companions from al-Nasriya school at al-Aqsa Mosque told me that Sheikh Abu Fateh Naser al-Maqdsi met the head of Shiite and complained to him about the corruption of people and this corruption will not change until the arrival of al-Mahdi. Abu Naser said, "Is there a specific time for his arrival?" Shiite said, "Yes," Abu Fateh said, "Is it known or unknown?", "It is known," he replied. Naser asked, "When will it be?", He replied, "When people are corrupted." Abu al-Fateh said: Do you protect him from the people, and all people have been corrupted except you? If you got corrupted, he would arrive", and then said "Quick his release and came back to our jurisprudence." The Shiite got tongue-tied.<sup>3</sup>

The previous paragraphs indicate the scientific activity in Jerusalem in the fifth century AH. It also emphasizes the existence of sectarian diversity in the city. Such diversity is not impeded by anything where dialogue and debates prevailed; not conflicts.

#### **Abi Aqaba Hanafi School**

Abi Aqaba Hanafi School was among the schools that debates were held in. Ibn al-Arabi said in this regard, "I

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, the law of interpretation. Page 436.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, the law of interpretation. Page 433-434.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Shatby, al-'ietisam. Page 205.

went to Abi Aqaba Hanafi School in Jerusalem on Friday, and Judge Al-Rihani was giving a lesson. During the lesson, a good-looking man came on, greeted us like scholars, and sat in the frontal line. Al-Rihani asked him to introduce himself. He said, "I was robbed by Al-Shotar (a group of bandits) yesterday during my way to this holy shrine. I am a student from this Saghan". The judge said, "ask him" – the scholars were honored by asking them questions – and the question about the infidel who resorted to the Holy Mosque, is it allowed to kill him or not? The man said that it is not allowed to kill him. Al-Rihani asked him about the evidence, he replied with a verse from Quran, "And kill them wherever you overtake them and expel them from wherever they have expelled you, and fitnah is worse than killing. And do not fight them at al-Masjid al-Haram until they fight you there. But if they fight you, then kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers." (Al-Baqarah, 191). He said, do not kill nor fight them if it is about fighting, it is a rule; if it is about not to fight, it is a warning. The judge, victorious to for Shafi'i and Malik Jurisprudences, objected to him and said, "This is an abrogated verse. Allah SWT said, "then kill the polytheists wherever you find them" (Al-Tawbah, 5)". Al-Saghani said, "This is not appropriate for the position of the judge and his knowledge. The verse you read is general, the verse I read is particular, and it is not allowed for anyone to say that the general abrogate the particular". The judge got tongue-tied, and this proves that the man was brilliant.

It is clear that the debate was one of the most successful teaching methods and sharing knowledge adopted by scholars. It is important to sharpen the mind and to stimulate the mind and brainstorm. It increases the opportunities for both students and teachers to discuss diverse topics in a scientific manner.

### **The Andalusians' Interest in Describing Urban Features**

The Andalusians, headed by Ibn al-Arabi, visited the Palestinian cities and described their landmarks. Ibn al-Arabi went down in Nablus, Jerusalem, Hebron, and Ashkelon. He also visited some shrines and sanctuaries in Palestine. During his visit to al-Aqsa Mosque, Ibn al-Arabi indicated some of the mosque's features like Dome of the Chain.

Jerusalem was also a haven for those fleeing from Andalusia. Al-Zahabi pointed out that the Umayyad caliph Hisham al-Mo'ayyid<sup>1</sup> He fled from Andalusia, from Cordoba in 400 AH/ 1009 AD, and arrived with his convoy in the Levant in a miserable status. Therefore, he came to Jerusalem and saw a mats maker. The Caliph stood looking at the man; the man asked him, "do you master this workmanship?" He replied, "No," he said, "you can stay here and help me, so he stayed there for a while, and he learned the workmanship of the mats. He lived in Jerusalem for many years, and then returned to al-Andalus in 424 AH/ 1032 AD."

Thus, Jerusalem has witnessed a clear Andalusian presence that has played an important role in various aspects of life, especially scientific life.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

### **Throughout the Study, the Researcher Achieved Some Results were the Most Important are**

- The religious motive – visiting Jerusalem and offering prayers in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the dome of the Dome of the Rock and the Mosque of Ibrahim Khalil - for the double reward, was the main reason for the

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<sup>1</sup> Third Umayyad Caliph of al-Andalus (976-1009, 1010-1013), son and successor of al-Hakam II (961-976), who was born in the year 965 in Cordoba and died May 18, 1013, allegedly killed by supporters of Sulayman, one of the many pretenders to the throne of Cordoba. His reign was disastrous at all levels, as it began the gradual decline of the Cordoban Caliphate state until its total disintegration in the year 1031.

migration of the people of Morocco and Andalusia to Jerusalem and the adjacent places.

- The presence of Andalusians in Palestine in general and Jerusalem in particular increased, which sustained the various links between the Andalusians and the people of Palestine.
- Scientific and cultural relations were at the top of relations between Jerusalem and Andalusia.
- Many Andalusians arrived in Jerusalem and learned about religious and linguistic sciences. Also, they participated in scientific debates with the scholars of Medina and others who came to the Holy Land.
- Ibn al-Arabi and Tartoushi were among the most prominent Andalusian scholars who documented the scientific and cultural links between their country and Palestine.
- The Andalusians contributed to the enrichment of scientific and intellectual life in Jerusalem.
- The active scientific movement that prevailed in Jerusalem before and after the Crusader occupation was the second reason for migration. Many of the Andalusian scholars contributed to the revitalization of the scientific movement, and they had their scientific councils, as well as mosques, and schools including students from all countries of the Islamic world.

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